



# Code Words

Volume 10, Issue 2     *Montgomery County Code Enforcement news from the Office of the County Attorney*

July 2007

Isiah Leggett, County Executive

Leon Rodriguez, County Attorney

## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY

*The Office of the County Attorney is the legal arm of the Montgomery County government. The County Attorney's staff exclusively advises and represents County agencies, including the Council. The Office of the County Attorney also serves the citizens of Montgomery County directly. Although staff cannot offer legal advice to individuals, we can offer guidance on the application of Montgomery County law, including code enforcement matters, and can help to direct those with questions to appropriate agencies. We can be reached at (240) 777-6700.*

## CODE ENFORCEMENT UNIT

*The Code Enforcement Unit serves the community by helping to fairly and reasonably enforce our County Code and helping to solve the problems leading to citations. If you have a question regarding County Code enforcement, a specific Code enforcement case, or would like to schedule a speaker for or meeting with your community group, please contact James Savage, Division Chief, at (240) 777-6779 or [james.savage@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:james.savage@montgomerycountymd.gov).*

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## Composting in Montgomery County

**James Savage**

*Associate County Attorney*

As the volume of solid waste increases incrementally with the population, Montgomery County's Division of Solid Waste Services (DSWS), part of the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), seeks ways to reduce the amount of waste collected and disposed. One of the ways to reduce the amount of solid waste collected is to compost yard waste into organic material.

Compost is the material that results from the controlled biological decomposition of organic wastes, better known as humus or mulch. Commercial landscapers are encouraged to engage in the process if they have a location that allows for large-scale composting. The County now encourages separating organic waste from the solid waste stream and operates a large-scale composting facility in Dickerson. This transfer station also offers free mulch to citizens, the by-product of shredding and composting branches and leaves collected at the facility.

Residential property owners are encouraged to compost organic material consisting of garden trimmings, leaves, grass, straw, twigs, and limited amounts of wood chips. These items are collected in bins, which allow the circulation of air within the pile of material. As the items aerate over time, a biological decomposition occurs and results in the return of the material to a humus-like product which enriches the soil where it is applied. Bins are available through the DSWS. The number of bins present on any particular property is limited to the size of the property and should be placed away from property lines.

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For composting to occur, one must periodically turn over the pile, to allow aeration, and moisten the material with limited amounts of water. Ideally, the size of the compost pile should be no greater than three feet by three feet. If the pile is not aerated, rotting will occur and cause offensive odors.

Composting material should not contain rocks, large branches, or stumps. Stumps and large tree branches are considered solid waste, if not removed from a residential property within 30 days or not converted to fire wood, identified by splitting and stacking the wood. Food waste, including, but not limited to, meats, fish, bones, dairy products, or vegetable matter should not be deposited in the compost. These items will attract rodents or other pests. Animal feces should also be excluded from the compost.

All residential property owners are encouraged to engage in composting yard waste. To obtain a free compost bin and more information, log onto Montgomery County's website ([www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)), click on the Departments link, then the Public Works and Transportation link, then the Solid Waste link, or call 240-777-6400. 🗑️



## Summer of Fun With Recreation

**Dennis Tuttle**

*Montgomery County Department of Recreation*

There is no such thing as the summertime blues at the Montgomery County Recreation Department, where there are more great activities for kids, adults, and seniors than anywhere in the Washington region. From pools, camps, classes, fitness, teen activities, sports instruction and leagues, to progressive activities for seniors, the Recreation Department offers hundreds of individual programs from June through August. "Summer programs are our most diverse and comprehensive lineup of the year," said Recreation Department Director Gabriel Albornoz. "It's a time when not only are kids out of school, but today's adults, including the County's growing number of seniors, want to be active, healthy, and happy. Our summer programs truly offer something for everyone."

**Pools**—Seven outdoor pools and four indoor aquatic centers offer competitive swim teams for all ages, lessons, recreational swimming, and many other activities. Summer pool passes are available for the family, but individual season and day passes are also available.

**Camps**—Open County-wide to kids aged 4-13, there are programs for teens up to age 18 and camps for children and teens with disabilities up to age 21. There is something for those who love arts and crafts, sports and games, theatre, dance, music, science, nature and much more. Most camps run in two-week sessions and range in price from \$100 to \$250.

**Classes**—Arts and crafts, dance, music, cooking, exercise and fitness, wellness, tiny tots, sports, games, yoga, horseback riding, skateboarding, photography, dog obedience—you name it, we have it!

**Teens**—Never a dull moment for County youth. The Summer Teen Travel Club conducts daytrips for tubing or rafting, visiting a theme park, or going to the beach. There are also the under-21 pool parties held each Friday night in July at a different County outdoor pool. The Summer Concert Series of local teen bands at Aspen Hill

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## IMPORTANT PHONE NOS.

Animal Services	(240) 773 – 5925
Abandoned Cars	(301) 840 – 2454
Air Pollution Incidents	(240) 777 – 7770
Building Permits	(240) 777 – 6370
Building Code Inspections	(240) 777 – 6210
Consumer Affairs	(240) 777 – 3636
County Information	(240) 777 – 1000
Electrical Licenses & Permits	(240) 777 – 6240
Environmental Protection	(240) 777 – 7770
Fire-Code Violations	(240) 777 – 2457
Housing & Code Enforcement	(240) 777 – 3785
Illegal Dumping	(240) 777 – 7770/DUMP
Untagged Cars	(240) 777 – 3785
Noise Control	(240) 777 – 7770
Recycling/Leaf Collection	(240) 777 – 6410
Snow Removal & Pot Holes	(240) 777 – ROAD
Solid Waste	(240) 777 – 6410
Street Lights	(240) 777 – 2190
Use & Occupancy Permits	(240) 777 – 6210
Vendor Information	(240) 777 – 6240
Water Pollution Incidents	(240) 777 – 7770
Weed Control	(240) 777 – 3785
Zoning Information	(240) 777 – 6240
Zoning Complaints	(240) 777 – 6259

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To be placed on our mailing list or to submit questions or comments, please contact us at the above address or [mcgatty@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:mcgatty@montgomerycountymd.gov). Please include your name, address, and telephone number or e-mail address. *Code Words* is published quarterly.

## Noise Control


**Kathryn Lloyd**

*Assistant County Attorney*

Noise in Montgomery County is regulated by Chapter 31B and Chapter 5 of the Montgomery County Code. Chapter 31B governs Noise Control and is administered by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This chapter deals with all types of noise and outlines allowable noise levels during both the daytime and the nighttime as well as prohibits a person from causing or permitting a noise disturbance. Chapter 5 governs Animal Control and is enforced, along with Chapter 31B, for noises caused by animals.

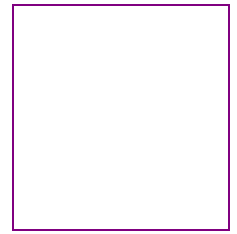
Both chapters prohibit animals from causing noise disturbances, but they have different standards for what constitutes a disturbance. Chapter 31B defines a noise disturbance as any noise that is unpleasant or annoying; unusual for the time or location; detrimental to one's health, comfort, or safety; or detrimental to the reasonable enjoyment of property or lawful conduct of business because of loudness, duration, or character of the noise. Chapter 5 prohibits an owner of an animal from allowing the animal to "cause noise that is loud and persistent enough to disturb another person's quiet enjoyment." Such behavior becomes a public nuisance if the noise continues after the owner has received any form of notice from the County of the problem.

Chapter 31B also exempts certain sounds from being considered noise violations, such as agricultural machinery, and provides a process for someone to apply to waive noise control requirements. For a waiver for a temporary event, households that may be affected by the event must receive public notice of the waiver application. For a general waiver, which can last for up to three years and is renewable, a hearing must be held on the application for waiver. Chapter 5, on the other hand, does not contain any exemptions and does not provide a method for an animal owner to seek a waiver of noise control requirements.

Violators of either chapter may be issued a civil citation. Chapter 31B specifies that an enforcement officer may issue a civil citation if the officer either witnesses the violation or receives noise disturbance complaints from at least two witnesses, while Chapter 5 does not require a minimum of two witnesses to complain about the noise for a citation to be issued. 



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED


#### **Recreation**

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library is held each Thursday in July. Summer Teen Centers at three locations in July features sports, arts, games, music, and off-site adventures, such as canoeing and swimming. Counselor In Training (CIT) opportunities are also available.

**Seniors**—Each of the County's senior centers or neighborhood community centers have a lineup of active programs. The Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation program has 10 day trips this summer, including professional baseball games, canoe trips, museum and boat tours, and more.

**Summer Sounds in the Parks**—Musical entertainment for the entire family with a lineup of great concerts through Aug. 29 at Cabin John and Wheaton regional parks, Whalen Park in Poolesville, and the Recreation Department Theatre on Randolph Road in Silver Spring.

For more information about Recreation Department activities, pick up a Summer Guide of activities and a Summer Camps Guide at one of the County community centers or public libraries, or call the Recreation Department for more information at 240-777-6820. These guides and even more information about individual programs are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd/rec](http://www.montgomerycountymd/rec). 

**RECREATION** DEPARTMENT